

Ethics Framework

Overview

Guidebook

1st edition



“We take care of you”
“نَحْنُ نَعْتَنِي بِكَ”



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VITAL SIGNS MEDICAL CENTER

ETHICS FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW

*A tool and resource manual for personnel,
staff and the management*

*Guidebook 1st edition
October 2021*

John Anastacio, MAN, RM, RN

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WELCOME in VITAL SIGNS MEDICAL CENTER

Vital Signs Medical Center reputation is shaped by our actions, choices and decisions each day. Our relation to the patient and their families is based on mutual trust and honesty. It is our ultimate duty as a healthcare provider to deliver comprehensive medical care to them according to their medical needs with accuracy and proficiency .

- Act fairly and objectively
- Recognize and address conflicts of interest
- Think about how our actions may impact our patients, co-workers, clients and community partners
- Exercise our best judgment
- Protect the confidentiality of the information entrusted to us
- Come forward if we see something significant or material that we think is not in the best interests of our patients or our organization
- Have the courage to stand up for what is right. "SPEAK UP"

Vital Signs Medical Center utilized ethical framework to layout the Code of Conduct (Code) observed in our organization. It outlines all our values, principles and standards of care that guide our actions and interactions particularly in our daily practice.

Respecting each other is important when we experience challenges. Being in a medical facility can be frustrating and stressful. We would like to hear and discuss any concerns you may have. Together we can find a way to resolve them.

We also welcome your **feedback** and any **compliments** that you would like to share with the health care team.

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A Muslim doctor has faith in God and destiny, and the conviction that there is a cure for every disease. Our Prophet (SAWT), on the authority of Yasir (RA), said: "For each disease there is a cure; and when the fight (treatment) is given, the disease is cured by the Will of Allah" [Ahmad and Muslim]



PREFACE

As one of private ambulatory and acute care healthcare provider located in Dammam, Saudi Arabia our mission is ultimately centralized in providing patient-centered healthcare with excellence in quality, convenient services, cost-effective and accessible; and making our local communities healthier by assuring that each patient receives individual, personal attention and by building up a long-term, partnering relationships built on trust and mutual respects. We are also committed to promote and protect the health of every residents and citizens of the Kingdom through leadership, partnership, innovation and action in healthcare services. VSMC's efforts to support a strong and effective healthcare delivery system are accompanied by a commitment to fostering a strong ethical culture, one in which ethical principles and values are incorporated into decision-making throughout the organization. *The Ethics Framework Overview, 1st edition* embodies this commitment. It provides an ethics lens through which the implications of proposed health programs, policies, interventions and other initiatives can be analyzed and challenges or dilemmas, resolved.

Intended Audience

This guidebook is intended for use by all Vital Signs Medical Center employees, including patients, their families, and the community in general, provided that outside personnel or staff from Vital Signs Medical Center must secure attribution request from the author and the facility.

Intended Application

This guidebook is designed to help our staff and personnel to plan, develop and implement a clinical ethics service at Vital Signs Medical Center. It is intended as a resource for information on the potential forms that a clinical ethics service might take, its scope, its internal structure and place within Vital Signs Medical Center, and the roles, operational processes and governance arrangements that it might adopt. This guidebook is offered by Vital Signs Medical Center as a contribution to the continued development and growth of clinical ethics services across the country, Saudi Arabia

The guidebook is divided into five (5) parts:

Part 1: introduces the role of ethics in healthcare and defines key terms such as "clinical ethics" and "organizational ethics".

Part 2: provides a conceptual foundation for this framework, including a primer on key ethical principles, duties, and values relevant to both clinical, and organizational ethical decision-making.

Part 3: describes the ethical decision-making process for Vital Signs Medical Center staff, learners, Management, and physicians to follow when addressing an ethical dilemma, including tailored worksheets to guide clinical and organizational ethical decision-making.

Part 4: evaluating the framework, worksheets and recommendation steps in addressing ethical dilemma either in organization or patient level.

Part 5: contains a list of ethics resources available to support clinical and organizational ethics at Vital Signs Medical Center.

Worksheet Exercise, Brochure, meet our clinical ethics committee and ethics consultation and many more...

INTRODUCTION

When you hear the word *ethics*, what comes to your mind? For many people, ethics means right versus wrong. However, according to Trillium Health Partners, 2013, **Ethics** is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with human conduct, more specifically the behavior of individuals in society. Ethics examines the rational justification for our moral judgments; it studies what is morally right or wrong, just or unjust.

Doran et al. 2014, further added that all healthcare is an inherently ethical activity in which aimed at improving the welfare of individuals as well as protecting the health of the community in general. Healthcare staff such as ours are bound to act in the best interests of and respect patients, while health services must not discriminate or treat people unfairly, and must manage resources responsibly. Every decision in healthcare reflects values and principles. Much of the time the values of patients, doctors, nurses, managers and others align, so that it seems as if there are no ethical issues at stake. At other times, values conflict, leading to distress for those involved and concern about what is the right thing to do. But whether or not there is conflict, ethically sound clinical practices and organizational cultures contribute to the overall quality of health systems.

Conversely, those who work in health care services may ask how ethics is relevant to their day-to-day activities. Ambulatory and acute care as a primary healthcare services somewhat typified by complexity. Often there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the best course of action. Evidence, derived from the research literature and ongoing public health data collection activities (such as needs assessments and surveillance) and economic data (including a wide variety of cost analysis approaches), are considered to be essential



inputs for these decisions. Yet ethical considerations pervade health decisions and deserve consideration as the third necessary "E" alongside evidence and economics as inputs into well defended and considered decisions, all this along the Ministry of Health's major healthcare transformation strategy's implementation.

So it is with ethics: The individual dictates what is "right" or "wrong" within the personal realm. Why, then, are there so many views on any one given topic? It is because each individual possesses a unique set of experiences and influences that guide his or her personal values system.

A **personal values system** is a set of beliefs held by an individual. These beliefs may overlap with other factors. Influences on a person's values system could include any of the following:

- Religion
- Socioeconomic conditions
- Family and Friends
- Geographic locations
- Cultural and heritage traditions

The health care professional must acquire a very specific set of skills that coincides with his or her field of expertise. For example, the

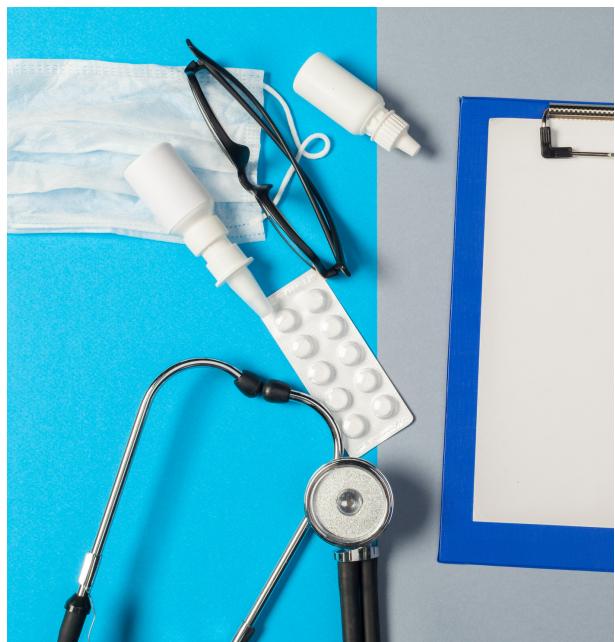
medical assistant must learn to properly sterilize medical instruments. Along with that and other job skills, the medical assistant must learn the art of caring for patients, including legal and ethical considerations.

If you subscribe to the notion that humans have an “inner voice” (some call this a conscience), you might believe this voice to be ethically sound. Ethics is a morally based field, meaning that this branch of philosophy corresponds with human morals. It is important, however, to remember that a person’s conscience and ethics are distinctly different. Ethics are guided by society and are a series of systematic beliefs, while the conscience refers to thoughts about one’s beliefs and actions. Both the conscience and ethics have been around since the beginning of human history.

Consider the caveman who lived by sheer survival device yet still congregated into groups with others of similar interests. There is evidence that humans of this era shunned those who did not agree with their codes of conduct, even expelling them from the group. Based on this, we can feel confident that their values systems, based on ethics, guided their beliefs and actions. This, then, would support the belief that ethics, on some level, is “built into” our very being (intrinsic). How each of us interprets each ethical situation, though, varies greatly.

Departed from its value of providing high quality care services with integrity, Vital Signs Medical Center is committed to uphold the highest ethical standards. Therefore, to help stakeholder to comply with the commitment and to support ethical decisions, Vital Signs Medical Center has developed this written ethical framework and make it available to the management, all staff, physicians, volunteers, patients, families, and the public. (WHO, 2015)

This framework is a step-by-step guidance on ethical decision making, including identifying stakeholders, getting the facts, and applying classic ethical approaches. This document is not intended and should not be considered a substitute to the professional's code of conduct and “The Code of Ethics for Healthcare Professionals” (issued by The Saudi Commission for Health Specialties) by which all health care providers should abide to. Indeed, Vital Signs Medical Center endorses and support all the existing laws and regulations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia related to the medical ethics and to medical profession in general.



Goals of the ethics framework

Develop a common approach to enhance and guide ethical decision making and practice that applies to both clinical and organizational ethical issues at Vital Signs Medical Center (VSMC).

Objective:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the ethical dimensions of healthcare provision and administration.
- Enables staff, physicians, learners, and the management to identify ethical dilemmas and issues related in their work and roles.
- Help staff, physicians, learners, and the management to analyze, deliberate and resolve ethical dilemmas and issues.
- Encourage staff, physicians, learners, and the management to align their decisions and actions with relevant values, duties, and principles.
- Educate staff, physicians, learners, and the management about local ethics resources so they can seek additional support when needed.

When to use the ethics framework?

While many decisions health care workers make daily have some ethical dimension, not every decision requires application of this framework; this is because Vital Signs Medical Center (VSMC) has pathways, policies, systems, and procedures that support us to do the right thing. However, in some situations, knowing or doing the right thing is unclear or difficult. These situations represent ethical dilemmas, which is framework is designed to address. Anyone who identifies an ethical dilemma is encouraged to apply this ethical framework to address the issues with appropriate stakeholders.



Signs of ethical dilemma

- The "**yuck factor**": an intuition that something isn't right; a feeling of moral angst or distress.
- Knowing the "right" thing to do in a situation but encountering organizational or personal barriers.
- Wondering what a good person or professional ought to do each situation.
- Encountering a situation where two equally important values seem to conflict (e.g., between telling the whole truth and preserving confidentiality).
- Conflict between members of a team around a challenging situation, often stemming from differing professional roles, beliefs, or worldviews.
- **Moral ambiguity** : a situation characterized by uncertainty about the right thing to do either because it is novel, or it has unique features that make standards of practice difficult to apply.

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Part 1: The Role of Ethics in Healthcare

Good organizational governance flows from the integration of effective ethical decision making, supportive systems and processes, and an enabling environment and culture. The relationship between these interdependent features of ethics within organizations is seen (Figure 1).

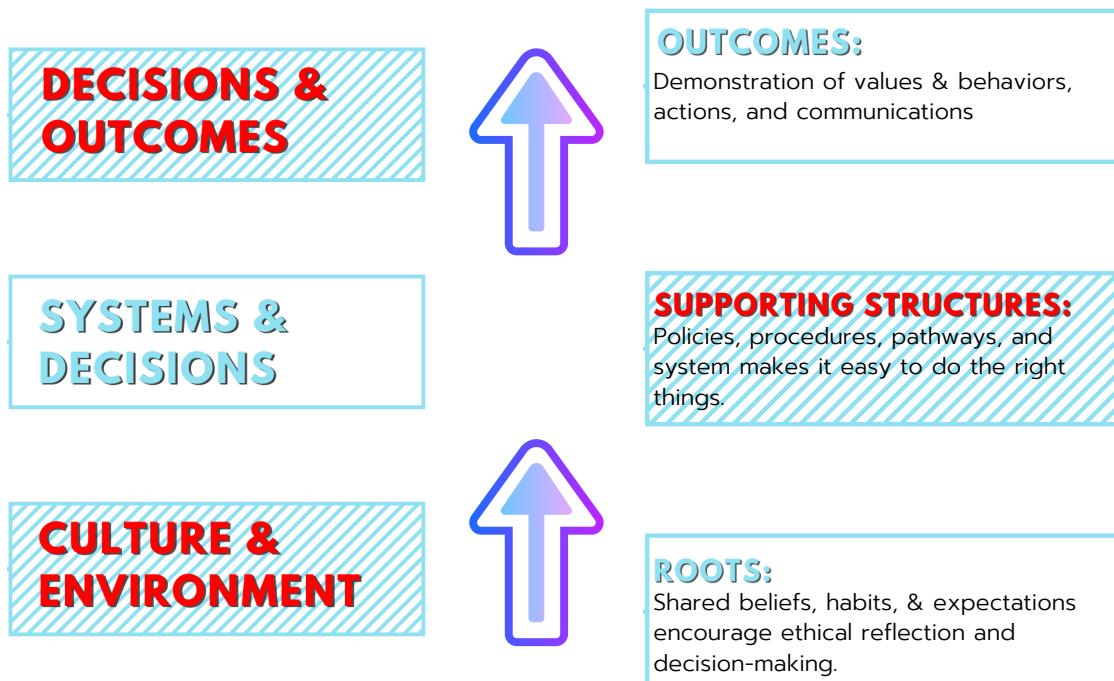


FIGURE 1

Ethical Decisions and Actions:

Ethics is a part of daily life because thoughts and actions are ultimately grounded in individual identities and collective values. Healthcare organizations and providers have moral obligations stemming from their role in enhancing health to support the life goals of people in. Their community, however, this primary role is balanced by many other ethical aspects of healthcare (see Figure 2). In trying to balance these multiple roles and obligations, administrators, support staff, learners, and health care professionals may encounter ethical conflict, uncertainty, or distress in their everyday working lives.

In many situations, enacting one's ethical duties and responsibilities is clear and easy. In other situations, knowing or doing the right thing may be fraught with. Uncertainties

and risks, every situation brings unique factors, with both internal and external influences, that because interpretive differences in terms of how best to weigh different ethical values. This framework guidelines is intended to assist Vital Signs Medical Center and its staff and personnel to systematically address ethical dilemmas, situations in which knowing or doing the right thing is unclear or difficult.

Ethical System and Processes:

Vital Signs Medical Center (VSMC) systems and processes - drive decision-making. Further, systems and processes (such as policies, procedures, pathways, guidelines, IT infrastructure, reporting mechanisms, etc.) can lead to ethical dilemmas (such as "silos", inequitable policies or lack of procedural standards leading to uneven quality of care).

But systems and processes can also prevent and resolve ethical dilemmas and make it easier to do the right thing (such as transparent and inclusive resource allocation processes, code of conduct that are uniformly enforced and guidelines that enhance patient and family centered care). While this framework designed to support decision-making related to specific ethical decisions or issues, it is crucial to think about how organizational systems and process might be contributing to an ethical dilemma and identify positive steps to improve them. For example, this framework aligns very well with Vital Signs Medical Center "Change and Quality Improvement Model" (**Define: Plan, Do, Study, Act**), and may be particularly useful in supporting the definition and planning phases of an ethically charged change.

Ethical Culture and Environment:

It is important that all Vital Signs Medical Center staff, physicians, management, and learners are empowered to "do the right thing" and integrate ethics into their daily practice. An organization that ultimately serves the public good, our decision-making processes must be transparent and perceived as just. Plethora of evidence that organizations that integrate ethics

into everyday decision-making through fair processes and systems provide higher quality service, and demonstrate improved employee morale, enhanced productivity, better customer service,

higher employee retention and lower job burnout.

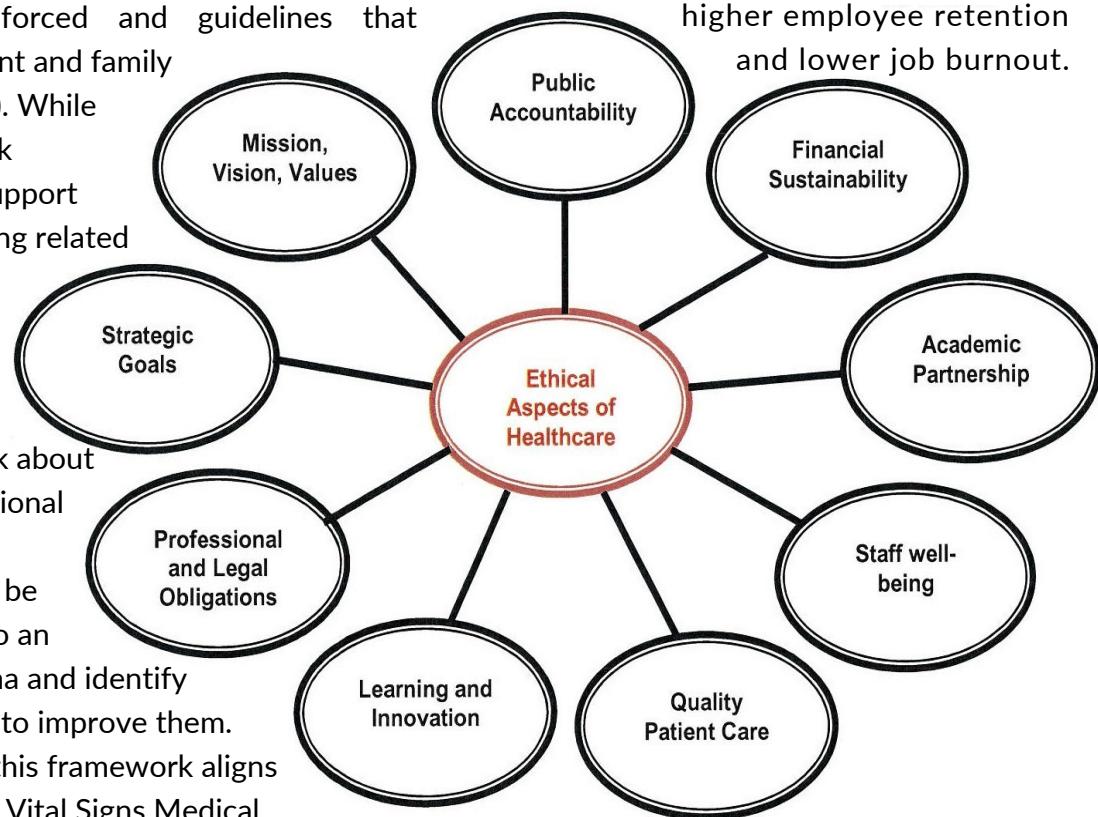


FIGURE 2

At Vital Signs Medical Center (VSMC), we function as a valued-based organization, thus the ethical basis of decisions must be articulated. Further, cultivating an ethical culture, whereas encouraged to engage in ethical reflection and questioning is crucial to nurture systems and processes that result in ethical decisions and actions.

Key Terms:

perspectives of all relevant stakeholders is integral to ethics. Ethics involves expanding our notion of the good from what is good for me, to consider "the greater good" (e.g., my profession, my family, my community, etc.).

***Value-based Healthcare** is an approach to organizing healthcare to maximize value, where value is defined in terms of the outcomes and experiences that matter most to the people receiving and delivering care, relative to the costs of achieving those outcomes (NSW Ministry of Health, 2021)



Ethics is not merely opinion or gut reaction, but involve reasoned deliberation to address the question: "What is the best thing to do, all things considered?"

Ethical System Process:

Disciplined reflection on how to make decision about what should be done in a particular situation. Ethical decision-making usually involves four related questions:

- What should we do? (*What options are good or right in this context?*)
- Why should we do it? (*Exploring the values and reasons that support each option*).
- How should we do it? (*What plan of action best aligns with these values and reasons?*).
- Who should do it? (*Who is responsible from making the final decision and enacting and communicating it?*).

Issues clinical ethics (or patient-specific ethics):

Ethical issues and dilemmas that arise in the care or treatment of individual and identified patients. In addressing clinical ethics issues, health care professionals should consider the specific duties they must identify patients, such as those related to confidentiality, disclosure, and consent etc. Some examples of clinical ethics issues include - whether to withdraw or withhold treatments for the

patient at end of life, conflict between a team and family regarding the perceived safety or treatment plan for the patient; conflict between members of healthcare team regarding whether to offer a fragile patient an innovative therapy; uncertainty regarding whether a patient with a severe eating disorder is competent to refuse treatment. Health care workers should be alert to any organizational contributors to a clinical ethics issues or dilemmas.

Organizational Ethics (or issue-focused ethics):

Organization's efforts to define its own core values and mission, identify areas in which important values come into conflict, seek the best possible resolution of these conflicts, and manage its own performance to ensure that it acts in accord with espoused values. "Organizational ethics addresses the ethical dimensions of decisions affecting groups of patients, as well as non-patient related issues such as human resource issues, policies and processes, and resource allocation decisions. Examples of organizational ethics issues include: the disclosure of a health risk to a cohort of affected patients; the review of a perceived conflict of interest of one of the top management members; the identification of reasonable criteria to resource allocation decisions; or the realignment of staff roles to support a new patient care process (such as access to best care plans).

Plans

Strongly beliefs, ideals, principles, or standards that inform ethical decisions or actions. This includes the Vital Signs Medical Center "High Five Guiding Principles" (Delivering high quality patient care, supporting physicians and nurses, creating excellent workplaces for our employees, taking leadership role in our communities, and ensuring (fiscal responsibility)).

Part 2: Foundations for Ethics in Healthcare

Common Ethical Values, Principles and Duties:

Certain ethical concepts apply across a healthcare organization, to both clinical and organizational ethical issues, creating a common foundation for ethical decision-making.

These common foundations include:

Mission, Vision, and Core Values:
These are the foundations for building ethical actions, systems, and culture.

Vital Signs Medical Center's MISSION:

- Providing patient-centered healthcare with excellence in quality, convenient services, cost-effective and accessible; and making our local communities healthier by assuring that each patient receives individual, personal attention and by building up a long-term, partnering relationships built on trust and mutual respects.

- We are committed to continuously educating ourselves and incorporating the best of technology to provide excellent care.
- We believe in the Islamic ethical practice in our relationship with patients, employees, the services provide, merchants and competitors. (Vital Signs Medical Center Company Profile, n.d.)





Vital Signs Medical Center's **VISION:**

We work to be trusted by patients, a valued partner in the community, and creators of positive change by creating a medical place where:

- People choose to come for healthcare.
- Physicians want to practice.
- Employees want to work.

We believe that providing high quality, accessible healthcare is our reason for being. We seek to be a model for other community health centers.



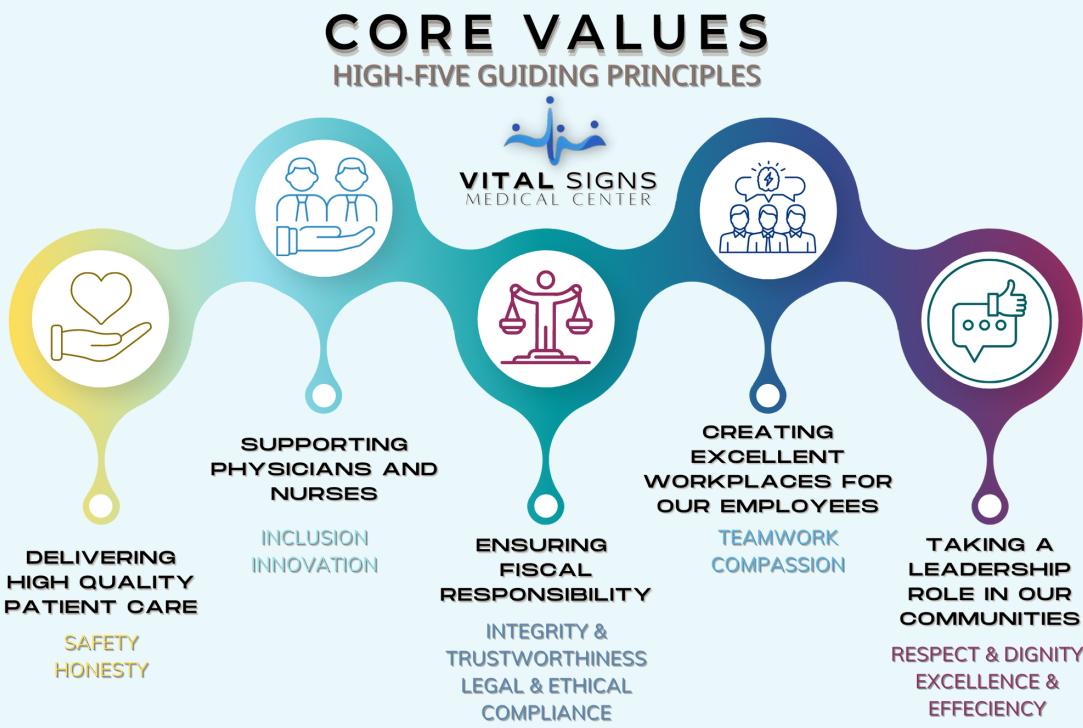


FIGURE 3

Vital Signs Medical Center's CORE VALUES

Delivering high quality patient care:

We treat all patients based on firm principles
"Safety" and "Honesty"

Supporting physician and nurses:

We be creative and open to new ideas and opportunities
"Inclusions" and "Innovative"

Creating excellent workplaces for our employees

We will act with concern for the well-being of every person
"Teamwork" and "Compassion"

Taking a leadership role to our communities

"Respect" and "Dignity"
"Excellence" and "Efficiency"

Taking a leadership role to our communities

We will treat every person with dignity and courtesy
"Integrity" and "Trustworthiness"
"Legal" and "Ethical Compliance"

Core Ethical Dimensions

Legislation

Vital Signs Medical Center conducts its clinical practice, business in compliance with the spirit and letter of laws regulating the administration of business and the provision of healthcare. Where there is uncertainty about the application or relevance of law in a particular circumstances, appropriate legal consultation and review is sought.

Relationships, Teamwork's, and Communications:

The Relationship Centered Care model acknowledges and values interactions with and between staff, patients, family members, students, volunteers, and others. Everyone, whatever their job, has a leadership role in developing a healthy relationship and promoting positive experiences. All those involved in and affected by ethical decision-making should be encouraged to express their points of view, ask questions, and raise concerns, within the appropriate limits of privacy and confidentiality. The perspectives of all stakeholders should be sought and considered with respect. To avoid misunderstanding or confusion, team members should make their communications direct, with respect and consistent, and must verify the information to avoid conflicts: silence should not be assumed to indicate agreement. Disagreements between team members should not be aired in front of the patients/ families or parties external to the conflict. Vital Signs Medical Center Valued-Based Code of Conduct identifies that a core competency of all employees and physicians is to engage in respectful communication and teamwork in daily practice (Beach, Inui, and Relationship-Centered Care Research Network, 2006).

Veracity and Fidelity

It is commonly agreed that we have a duty of veracity, i.e., a duty to tell the truth and not

to lie to or deceive others, a related duty is one of fidelity, which means the keeping of promises, both implicit and explicit. These duties should support relationships between healthcare providers and patients/clients, as well as between managers and staff. A duty of truthfulness is part of the respect we owe to those in our care and our employ. It's implicit in our dealings with all persons that we will honor our responsibility to keep our promises. Lying fails to show respect for persons and their autonomy, violates implicit contracts, and threatens relationships based on trust.

Utility or the "Greater God"

The principle of utility is about making the best use of available resources, trying to provide the greatest good for the greater number. This requires thinking about the possible consequences or outcomes of our actions and decisions and working towards maximizing good or outcomes while mitigating possible negative consequences especially vulnerable parties like patients.

Justice

The principle of justice demands that people be treated fairly and without prejudice, equals ought to be treated equally, but unequal treatment is justified considering morally relevant differences, such as those pertaining to needs (e.g., when critically ill patients are treated first because the risk of harm or impending death is greater than those with less acute illnesses) or likelihood of benefits (e.g., published evidence of effectiveness). Justice is also about promoting equity. Often by providing resources for improvement especially the most vulnerable members of the society (the poorest or sickest).

Organizational Justice

Fairness in the workplace, especially that the ethical basis of decision-making process and all means in which allocation decision are made.

Organizational Justice is Grounded in Three (3) Principles

Procedural Justice

The perceived fairness of decision-making processes. Fairness entails those decision-making processes meaningfully include all relevant stakeholders; that accountability for decisions is clear at the outset; the decisions are made based on valid reasons (e.g., evidence, principles, and arguments) that "fair-minded" people can agree are relevant under the circumstances; and those decisions are communicated transparently and promptly.

Relational Justice

The perceived quality of the interactions among individuals involved in or affected by the decisions. Quality interactions entails that the different opinions are valued and encouraged; everyone is responsible for communicating respectfully and all interactions are supported by Vital Signs Medical Center Code of Conduct.

Distributive Justice

The perceived fairness of decision outcomes. Fairness of outcomes is consistent with reasonable and defined criteria; recognition and rewards are distributed equitably; and outcomes of decisions are evaluated and improved.

Confidentiality & Privacy

Healthcare workers and Vital Signs Medical Center as an organization are obliged to keep the information about their patients confidential and to only access confidential information that is required for the performance of their duties. This obligation is evaluated and improved. Confidentiality provides a foundation trust in the therapeutic relationship. Without an understanding that their disclosures will be kept secret, patient may withhold relevant personal information, and thus may be denied important treatments. Additionally,

patients and their legal guardians have the right to control the use of dissemination of personal information. At times, law and policy offer clear guidance to healthcare workers regarding acceptable exceptions to confidentiality at other times, workers best judgment must be used in consultation with appropriate resources:

Reasonable exceptions to the duty of confidentiality include the following situations / conditions:

- a. The duty to protect children by reporting disclosures and / or suspicions of child abuse.
- b. The need to ensure the safety of clients who are a danger to themselves or others.
- c. The legal subpoena of client records to a court of law.

Managers and colleagues also owe a duty to staff to honor their privacy by not disclosing or discussing confidential information.

Virtue and Reflective Practice:

Virtue ethics is concerned with the characteristics and qualities of being an ethical person. A good practitioner is one who has the necessary knowledge, judgment, and technical skills to be competent; but who also displays moral excellence by demonstrating certain virtues (such as kindness, empathy, tact, and courtesy) derived from a sense of "ought" rather than "must". Individuals should be encouraged to reflect on the kind of person or professional they wish to be and what is required of them when ethical issues are identified. In addition, self-reflection on how one's cultural/personal/religious values and professional training influence one's motives and behavior is essential to the critical analysis of ethical dilemmas.

Respect for Diversity and Contacts:

Culture is not simply understood as ethnicity but rather the idea that all of us 'have



Clinical Ethics: Principles, Values and Duties:

Healthcare providers are bound to practice conscientiously, in accordance with their own Code of Ethics and practice standards as set out by Saudi Commission for Health Specialties. The following principles and values are featured among others in the Ethics of the medical profession guide issued and the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties and are relevant to many patient-specific clinical ethical dilemmas.

Therapeutic Relationship (Fiduciary Duty):

The therapeutic relationship is the foundational principle of ethical patient care. Good therapeutic relationships are founded on mutual trust and respect between providers and recipients of care. When care providers lose this sense of mutuality, they become mere technical experts and the

culture' and that we live in communities in which there are shared systems of meaning and understandings of the person in society, narratives, or stories can be extremely valuable to provide a better understanding of the persons involved in ethical dilemmas and their contexts. Attending to context also requires attending to oppression the basis of race, class, gender, and ability, among other factors and, the effects of oppression on health status and health care. Case-based approaches to ethical analysis support this idea that "moral problems must be resolved within concrete circumstances, in all the interpretive complexity, with the appeal to relevant historical and cultural traditions, with reference to critical institutional and professional norms and virtues."

quality in the relationship is lost. When persons receiving care lose this sense of mutuality, they experience a perceived or real loss of control and increased vulnerability because persons receiving care are often weakened by their illness and may feel powerless in the health care environment, the primary responsibility for creating a trusting and respectful relationships rest with the care providers. The special obligation health care professionals must safeguard the interests of their patients is sometimes referred to as "fiduciary duty".

Patient and Family Centered Care (Respect for Patient Autonomy):

Capable patients have a right to autonomy or self-determination; that is, to not have treatments imposed upon them. The needs

capable patients have a right to autonomy or self-determination; that is, to not have treatments imposed upon them. been designated by the patient, to collaborate with them in planning and implementing treatment, and to respond to their needs and concerns. Patients have a right to confidentiality; thus, it should be up to them whether they choose to involve their family members or others in health care decision-making. Patient- and Family-Centered care does not mean that patients or members of their families have a right to demand treatments that fall outside standards of practice. Treatment plans are negotiated between patients / families and healthcare care professionals, balancing the principles described below.

Informed Consent:

Health care providers have a responsibility to ensure that capable patients have an opportunity to be involved in decisions regarding their care. Patients are empowered to make treatment decisions by being informed about their diagnosis and prognosis, reasonable options, the harms and benefits of each option, and the consequences of not having treatment. Patients should be provided with the necessary support, time, and opportunity to participate fully in discussions regarding care. Capable patients may also choose to designate someone else to make decisions on their behalf. A patient legal guardian makes decisions for a patient who lacks capacity to consent. The role of the patient legal guardian is to protect the autonomy, rights, and interests of the patient; to speak for the patient when he/she can't speak. The patient legal guardian is responsible to make decisions in accordance with the known preferences, wishes, values, beliefs, and goals of the patient. The capable patient or legal guardian has the right to refuse, or withdraw consent to any care treatment,

including lifesaving or life-sustaining treatment.

Beneficence and Best Interest:

The primary goal of health care is to provide benefit and prevent harm to person receiving care. The capable patient generally has the right to determine what constitutes benefit or quality of life to him/her in each situation, including physical, psychological, spiritual, social, or other considerations. When a patient is not capable to make his/her own decisions, and no applicable wishes relevant to the circumstances are known, health care decisions should be made in the patient's best interests. Best interests are determined through joint decision making between legal and health care professionals.

Best interests incorporate several considerations, including whether treatment options meet the following criteria:

- a. Support the patient's known wishes, beliefs, goals, and values.
- b. Improve the patient's condition well-being.
- c. Prevent the patient's condition or well-being from deteriorating.
- d. Cause pain or suffering to the patient.
- e. Entail risks harm that outweigh the potential benefits.

Conscientious Objection:

Healthcare providers should not be expected or required to participate in procedures that are contrary to their professional judgment or against deeply held personal values and beliefs. Healthcare providers should proactively identify situations that are likely to conflict with their strongly held personal values and beliefs and speak to their manager proactively about how to balance their personal and professional obligations in

these situations. While healthcare providers should be supported to exercise conscientious objection where they are asked to participate in procedures or practices that conflict with their own moral values or professional judgment, doing so should never put the patient receiving care at risk of harm, abandonment, or disparagement. Appropriate referrals or transfer to another practitioner willing to provide the care (where possible) should be facilitated to mitigate risk to the patient.

Competencies

Two major models have been developed to identify the competencies for clinical ethics services in the UK and the USA, respectively. A synthesis of the core competencies put forward in these models is in the table below. These are competencies that the committee or group should have collectively. It is not envisaged that all members will individually have all competencies (CDC, 2017).

Knowledge Core Competencies

Knowledge of basic concepts and analytical strategies relevant to clinical ethics (including a requirement for advanced knowledge of ethical theory and moral reasoning by at least one committee or consultation group member)

Knowledge of relevant professional codes, standards, guidelines and policies (local, national and international)

Knowledge of relevant legal and regulatory matters

Knowledge of relevant clinical practice and processes related to clinical decision making

Knowledge of the role of clinical ethics services in the management of clinical situations

Knowledge of the local community, including patients, families and organizational staff

Knowledge of health care services and systems as they relate to the work of the clinical ethics service

Skills Core Competencies

Ability to apply the relevant knowledge (per above) to clinical and organizational issues

Ability to identify and analyze the ethical dimensions of issues considered by the clinical ethics service

Ability to facilitate effective deliberation (including eliciting the views and values of those involved)

Ability to practice and promote active listening and respectful communication

Ability to synthesize relevant considerations and formulate a range of potential responses

Ability to appropriately document and communicate the deliberations and decisions of the clinical ethics service

Ability to locate and critically use relevant academic literature

In reflecting upon these core competencies it is important to emphasize that:

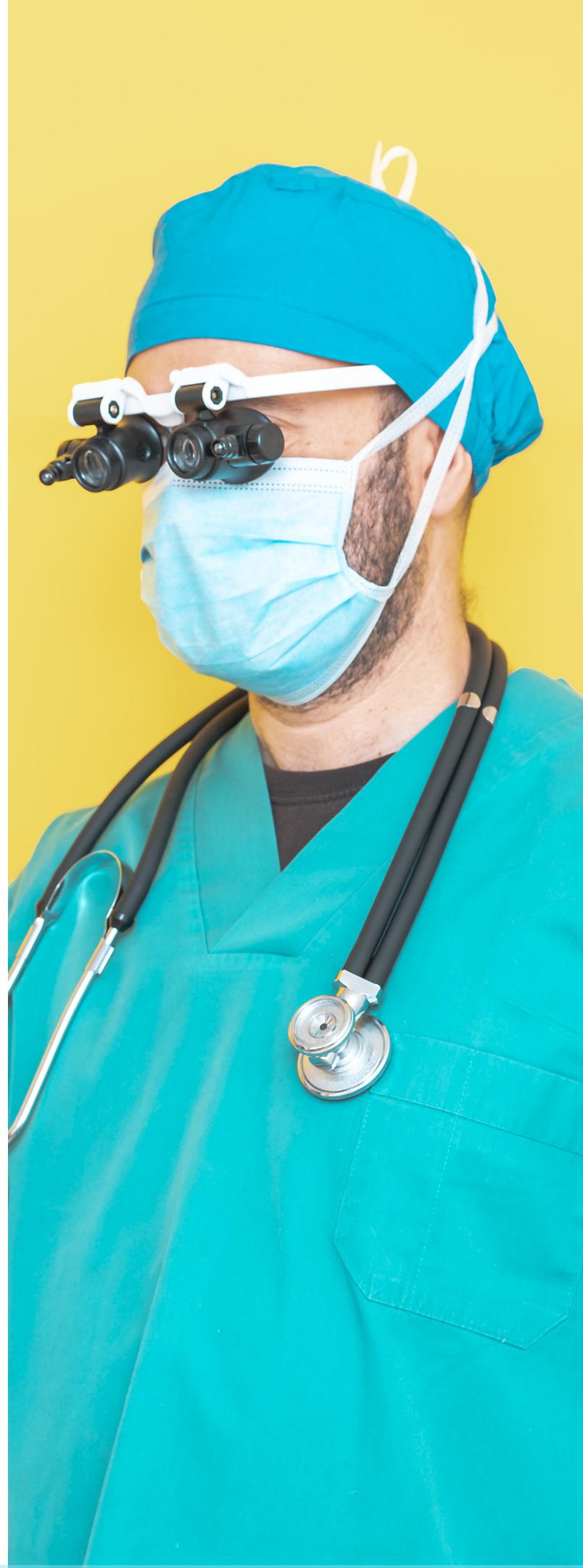
- One of the strengths of a committee or group as a model of clinical ethics support is the complementary experience and expertise of individual members within the group.
- Core competencies necessary to provide clinical ethics support are founded on skills and knowledge. Different levels of skill and knowledge will be required for the undertaking of specific functions.
- Ideally, all members of a clinical ethics committee or group will have basic levels of skill and knowledge and some members will have advanced levels of knowledge and skills necessary for specific functions, e.g. leading a case consultation.

- Individuals providing case consultation services separately from the committee or group should possess all of the core skills, knowledge and personal characteristics. They require advanced skills and knowledge in some areas.
- If teams provide consultation, the full range of core competencies should be available within the team, although not all individuals will possess them initially. All members of case consultation teams should acquire at least basic competencies.
- Personal characteristics that promote and reinforce the skills and knowledge-based competencies are also necessary. Examples of such characteristics include integrity, compassion and prudence.

With respect to how these competencies might be acquired, if not already present, some options include attending ethics conferences, short courses and training modules, self-directed learning, designated topic-driven 'study days' and pursuit of full academic degrees.

"We take care of you"

Vital Signs Medical Center always believes and agreed that ethics and etiquettes are sourced from the glorious guidance of Islam that urges the best of manners, good performance, and understanding that Allah observes all our deeds, accordingly, preservation and conservation of human life as our ultimate function being a healthcare professionals. Therefore, setting our values and principles concerned with the modalities of proper conduct when practicing our profession.





Ethics Consultation Service

The Vital Signs Medical Center Clinical Ethics Committee Consultation Service, is here to help you, your family and healthcare providers identify, understand, clarify, and resolve

moral and ethical issues in the hospital setting.

Vital Signs Medical Center Ethics Consultation Service is an excellent resource to help you, your loved ones and your treatment team as you reckon with challenging questions in the midst of stress and crisis particularly during visits in Vital Signs Medical Center

Anyone - including a doctor, nurse, patient, or family member may request a consultation at any time.

Reasons for requesting this service include:

- You believe there is an issue or concern about what is right, good or fair involving a patient's care.
- You feel your concerns have not been addressed after speaking with your treatment team.
- There are concerns associated with end-of-life care (for example, code status, advance directives, withholding or withdrawal of aggressive medical treatment).
- You have questions about who can make decisions on behalf of the patient.
- The patient refuses treatment that doctors are recommending.
- The patient, family or caregiver is in emotional distress.

Request an ethics consultation

if you are a patient or family member, simply notify your nurse, doctor or the nurse manager that you would like an ethics consultation.



You may contact the Ethics Consultation Service through (13) 889-9997 (or ext. XXX if you are calling from within the facility) and ask to page the Ethics Consultation Service. Leave your name and the phone number at which you may be reached. An Ethics Consultant or team of Ethics Committee will call you back shortly.

Ethics Consultation is available Saturday to Thursday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. After hours leave a message with the Office of Administration and Management at ext. XXXX email ethics@vitalsigns.com.sa

and an Ethics Consultant will get back to you the next day.

Clinical Ethics Team Commitment

In the course of our care, we will focus on what is right and good and in the best interests of our patients. We will promote and defend human dignity and respect the integrity of human life from its beginnings until death. We will be guided by the highest moral and ethical norms, by the law, by the values of our community, by Islamic practices, and by the character and policies of Vital Signs Medical Center. We invite all those we serve—our patients, their families and providers of care—to seek an Ethics Consultation whenever ethical questions arise.

Who Can Attend the Consultation?

The consultant, usually with other members of the consult team, will guide the process and may invite physicians and other professionals involved in the case. You may invite anyone you choose. A smaller group often works best. Ideally, participants should be knowledgeable of the facts and be aware of the patient's wishes and best interests.



Clinical Ethics Committee
013-8899997
ethics@vitalsigns.com.sa
info@vitalsigns.com.sa
www.vitalsigns.com.sa

What happens during consultation?

The consultation begins with a review of the pertinent medical facts and your consultants will facilitate a discussion of the participant's views, questions and concerns. They will then try to shed light on the ethical principles or norms as well as on legal considerations and hospital policies affecting treatment approaches. The consultants will then try to clarify the core issues and will make recommendations toward a reasonable resolution.

The ethics consultants will not make or impose decisions on the participants. Rather, their role is to enable others to move forward with the benefits of experienced ethical insight, clarity and compassionate interest in their concerns.

What you should know about Ethics Consultation?

- There is no charge for this service
- The recommendations of the consultants will become part of the patient's medical record
- The consultation, like all medical treatment, is confidential
- Further consultation may always be held at your request
- We will provide referrals to appropriate outside resources at your request

Part 3: The Ethical Decision Making-Process

Values permeate everything we do in a health care setting and sometimes these values come



into conflict; when they do, it is imperative to recognize that one is experiencing an ethical dilemma. Ethical conflicts or dilemmas are usually best resolved through direct engagement with the parties involved. Often there will not be an answer that pleases everyone and so it is our responsibility to ensure that our processes for decision-making are fair and legitimate. This tool is designed to help you think through difficult decisions-when ethics is a factor-and develop justifiable reasons for your choices in a rigorous, transparent, and fair manner.

This process is captured in the acronym:

I identify issue and decision-making process.

S tudy the facts.

S elect reasonable options.

U nderstand values and duties.

E valuate and justify options.

S ustain and review the plan.

When we encounter ethical dilemmas our first instinct may be to find a quick fix; however, our desire for resolution may cause us to misidentify the key issues or overlook important facts, values, or stakeholder voices. Ethical decision-making starts with a strong foundation based on a clear understanding of the nature of the problem and all relevant facts and perspectives, before deciding on options, weighing those options, and making the decisions seen in Figure 4.



ISSUES Ethical Framework is adapted from Hamilton Health Sciences, HHS Pandemic **ISSUES** Ethics Framework. COVID-19: HHS Resources Ethics During COVID-19. [<https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/covid19/staff-physician/hhs-resources/>]
post with permission

All Staff, physicians, learners and Management and Administrative members are encouraged to use this process methodology to initiate a review process for an ethically troubling situation. Two worksheets have been developed to help individuals and teams put this process into action. The Organizational Ethics Worksheet has been designed to help address any ethical issue that arises from a system or situation that is not patient-specific. The Clinical Ethics Worksheet is tailored for use healthcare professionals and teams to address patient-specific ethical dilemmas.

This framework consists of 5 steps.

In each step, there are a number

of open-ended questions
designed to guide users
through the deliberation
of ethical considerations
that come into play
when making

decisions about
proposed public
health programs,
policies,
interventions or
initiatives, or
ethical dilemmas
that arise in the
practice of public
health. The questions
are a guide. They
are not meant to be
applied as a formula,
nor are they necessarily
exhaustive. Some questions
may be more relevant to certain
types of decisions than others. Users
therefore should feel free to explore only
the questions that are relevant to their situation.

Each step also includes an introduction that explains

the objectives of the step. Though the steps are presented sequentially, there is interplay among them. Information gathered in one step may inform other steps and may require users to go back to a previous step in order to revisit facts or conclusions. Users should feel free to move between the steps as needed.

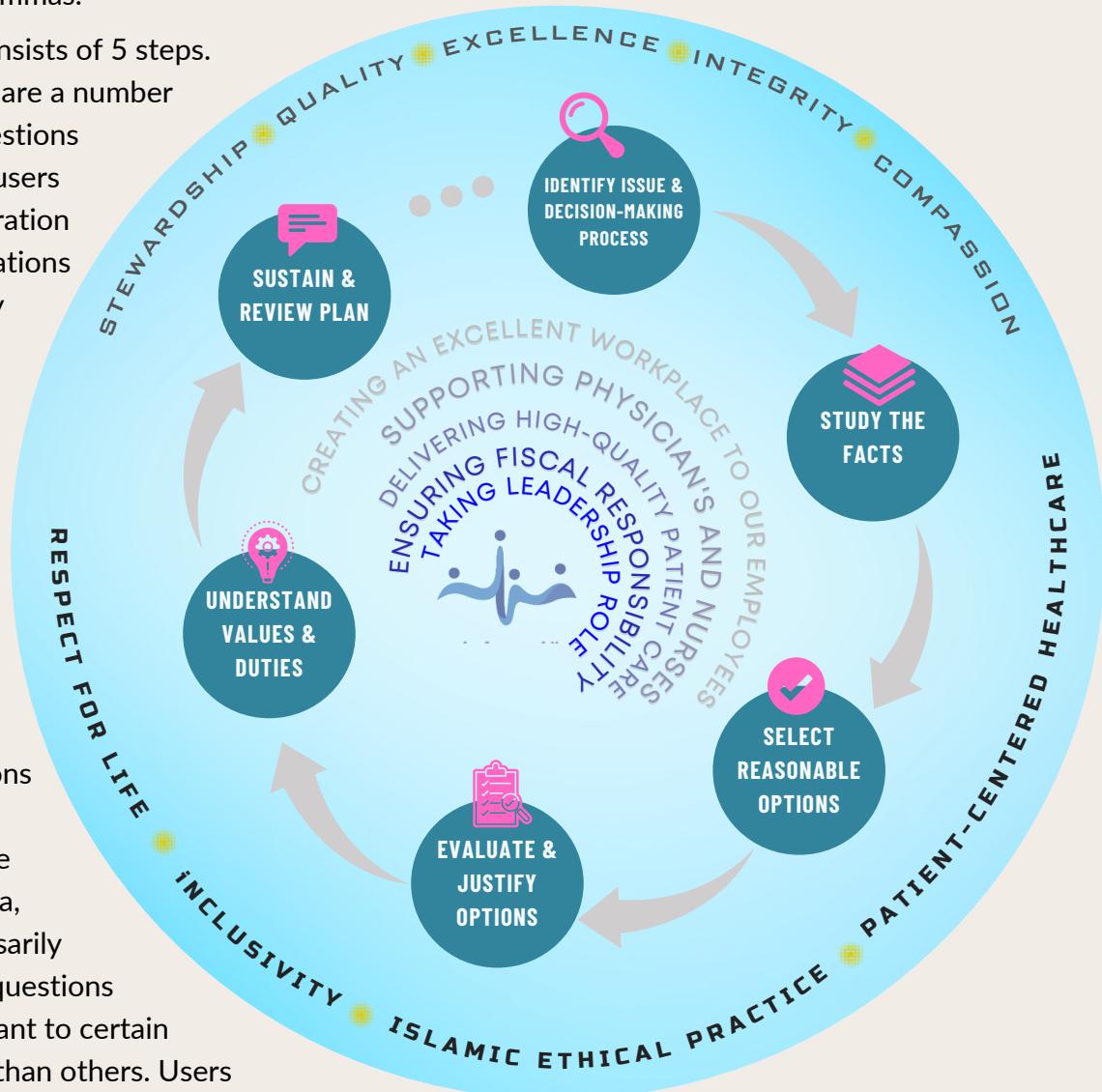


FIGURE 4

This framework is adapted from: Trillium Health Centre, ibid., N. Kass, "An Ethics Framework for Public Health" (2001) 91:11 Am. J. of Public Health 1776, and P. Nieburg, R.G. Bernheim & R.J. Bonnie, "Ethics and the Practice of Public Health" in R.A. Goodman et al., Law in Public Health Practice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 43 at 50.

Guidelines for Using the Ethical Framework with Groups:

Creating a forum where stakeholders have the opportunity to engage in a collaborative discussion about a particular dilemma or situation in an open and non-threatening environment is often the most efficient way to address an ethical issue.

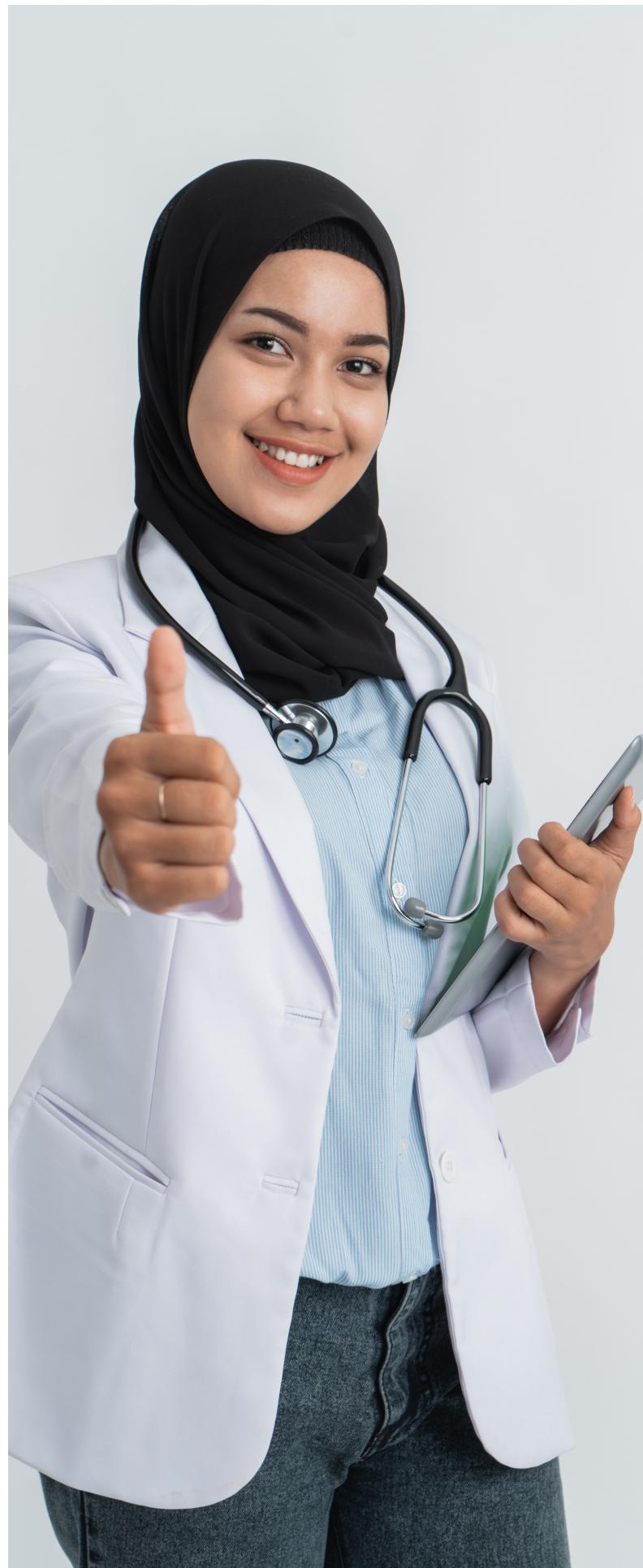
It is important to define at the outset of a meeting certain aspects of the process, to increase transparency, participation, and satisfaction, including:

- Ground rules (i.e., everyone gets to speak uninterrupted, confidentiality of discussion, respectful interactions, etc.).
- Roles for the meeting (i.e., chair, timekeeper, recorder).
- The decision-making process (i.e., how stakeholders' feedback will be used and who is ultimately responsible for making the decision).

The appropriate worksheet (Organizational or Clinical) may be distributed to all participants to help keep the process on track, it should be worked through one section at a time, recognizing that ethical decision-making is not always linear. You may have to go back and revisit earlier steps in the process as additional questions arise, or facts emerge.

Keep a copy of this toolkit handy, to provide a quick reference for key terms and concepts.

At the end of the meeting, summarize each section of the worksheet briefly. Define a clear plan for documenting and communicating any decisions made and assign specific individuals to accomplish next steps. As required, a follow up meeting should be scheduled to review outcomes and address systems issues identified.



Organizational Ethics ISSUES PROCESS TIPS

1 IDENTIFY the ethical issues and decision-making process

- Engage in reflective practice and consider your “gut reaction” to the situation. What preconceptions and judgements might you bring to the situation? What are your loyalties and institutions? Where do these come from?
- State the conflict or dilemma as you currently see it. Try to articulate the issue in one sentence. If you can't, it may be better to break the problem down into two questions or issues and tackle them one at a time. Example of ethics question: “Given (state uncertainty or conflict about values). What decisions or actions are ethically justifiable?
- Determine best process for decision-making: How urgent is the situation? How can stakeholder's best be engaged? Who ultimately has decision-making authority? Stakeholders deserve to know and understand how and why a decision that affects them was made. It is important to remember that transparency is not just about the transmission of information; it is also about keeping people engaged constructively in the process. In the rare cases where confidentiality is ethically necessary, the process should still be made as transparent as possible while identifying the confidentiality constraints explicitly.

2 STUDY the Facts

In any complex situation, different parties will have different views of the facts of the situation. Ideally, all stakeholders should have a chance to present their views to one another in a respectful, open environment, considering both the context of the situation and the evidence.

- **Stakeholder Perspective:** all stakeholders should have an opportunity to voice their views about the issue (staff, community, patients, etc.).
- **Evidence:** include risks and benefits to the organization and patients; impact of situation on quality or services; best practices, etc.
- **Contextual features:** internal and external directives and partnerships legal considerations past cases; cultural or environmental issues (i.e., staff morale); public opinion.
- **Resource implications:** human and resources.

3 SELECT reasonable options:

Always look for more than two options, try brainstorming options without evaluating at first, or start by describing your “ideal solution” and work backwards to options that are more realistic given the context.

4 UNDERSTAND values and duties

- Which values are in conflict? Where values may be compromised, what can you do to minimize the negative impact?
- Are there professional or legal obligations or standards to consider?
- Consider how various options reflect or support the duties, principles and values described in Part 2.

5 EVALUATE & JUSTIFY Options

For each option consider.

- What are possible harms to various stakeholders?
- What are the probable benefits to various stakeholders?
- What will be the impact on staff our mission and quality of care?
- Which duties, principles and values support this option?
- What if everyone in these circumstances did this? (Does this set a good example? Are we making it easier or harder for others to do the right thing?).
- Does it meet organizational justice requirements, procedural justice, distributive justice, and relational justice?
- Does your solution answer the question you described above?
- Choose the option with the best consequences overall and closest alignment with key duties, principles, and values.

- Clearly state reasons for the decision, Remember that you are not aiming at "the perfect" choice, but a good and defensible choice under the circumstances.
- Anticipate how you might answer criticisms.

6 SUSTAIN and REVIEW the plan

Accepting responsibility for an ethical choice means ensuring that the decision made is enacted by articulating a clear plan of action, communicating it to stakeholders appropriately and addressing systems that might have contributed to the problem. It also means accepting the possibility that you might be wrong or that you may need to revise your decision in light of new information or changing circumstances. In reviewing the plan consider:

- How well did the decision-making process work?
- Was the decision carried out?
- Was the result satisfactory?
- Does this situation point to a systems problem (e.g., Policy gap)?
- What lessons were learned from the situation?
- How will the team respond to similar situations in the future?
- Are there opportunities to appeal or modify the decision based on new information?
- Have new questions emerged? (If so, do they require similar deliberation?)
- Is there a formal evaluation plan in place to monitor progress, good practices, and opportunities for improvement?

Reflection Exercise

From your past experience, write at least three (3) ethical dilemmas in your daily practice, and how did you handle those dilemmas?

Discuss & Reflect

Case Study: You are working in a healthcare facility but you are handling a different patient. An old friend calls you to ask about the prognosis and treatment options of a patient in your healthcare facility. He says to you: "Can you please check the patients file and find out and let me know about this patient's condition and treatment plan? No one seems to tell the relatives what is going on. They have asked me to find out exactly what is happening". You can easily access the files and all reports.

Can there be any ethical issues in your going through the patient's file and sharing the information with his relatives?

What possible harm can you do to the patient by sharing his information with your friend?

What will you do in this situation? (Refer to [SCFHS code of ethics](#)).

What are the possible situations when a patient's confidentiality can be breached by the health practitioners?

Part 4: Evaluating the Ethical Framework

Vital Signs Medical Center is interested in finding out about users' experience of **ISSUES**, and their thoughts about the usability of, the framework.

1. Was your understanding of ethical issues enhanced through the use of the Framework?
2. Did the Framework help you make a decision with which all decision-makers were comfortable?
3. Would you use the framework again? If not, why?

Please send your *feedback* to the Vital Signs Medical Center with a subject as "*Evaluation for ISSUES framework*" at

janastacio@vitalsigns.com.sa | info@vitalsigns.com.sa

or you may visit our website at www.vitalsigns.com.sa



ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS WORKSHEET

ISSUES

This worksheet is designed to help people engage in rigorous ethical decision-making regarding organizational issues. Ethical decision-making is not linear; you may have to revisit earlier steps in the process as additional questions arise or facts emerge.

1 IDENTIFY issues and DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- Engage in reflective practice: what is your gut reaction?
- State the question or dilemma as you currently see it: "Given [state uncertainty or conflict about values], what decisions or actions are ethically justifiable?"
- Determine best process for decision-making and key stakeholders?

2 STUDY the Facts

- The perspectives of all stakeholders should be considered, as well as the context of the situation and relevant evidence.

Stakeholder Perspectives:

Staff, patients, community, partners, etc.

Evidence:

Risks, benefits, impact on quality or services, and best practices

Resource Implications:

Human and Financial

Contextual Features:

Internal and External Directives, legal consideration, past cases, cultural issues

3 **SELECT** Reasonable options:

- What are the realistic options? (Look for more than two)

Alt 1

Alt 2

Alt 3

4 **UNDERSTAND** values and duties

- What principles, duties and values are relevant to the options (See part 2 of Ethical Framework)
- What are the relevant legal requirements, professional standards, and policies?
- Are key values, duties, principles, or standards in conflict?

Vital Signs Medical Center Mission, Vision and Values, Legislation,
Vital Signs Medical Center Policies, Utility and Justice, Veracity, Confidentiality and Privacy,
Relationships and Teamwork, Virtues, Respect for Diversity

5 **EVALUATE** and justify options

- What are the possible harms / benefits to various stakeholders of various options?
- Choose the option with best consequences and alignment with duties, principles, and values.
- State clear reasons for your choice, anticipate questions and criticisms.

Alt 1

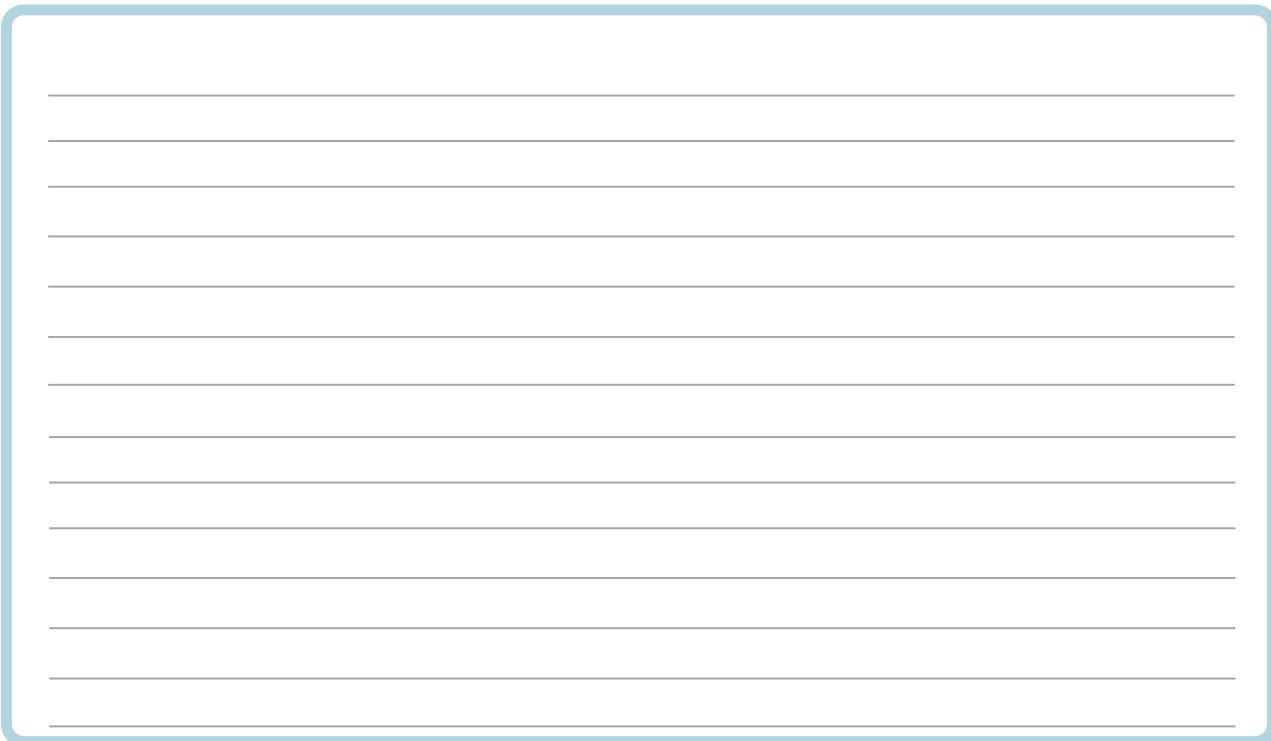
Alt 2

Alt 3

6 SUSTAIN and review plan

- Identify how best to implement, communicate, and document the decision to meet Organizational Justice principles (procedural justice, distributive justice, relational justice).
- Reflect on the decision and the process. What lessons could be learned for future cases?
- Does this situation point to a systems or organizational cultural problem (e.g., policy gap)?

Other Notes:



A large rectangular area with a light blue border, intended for handwritten notes.



CLINICAL ETHICS

ISSUES

1 IDENTIFY issues and DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- Engage in reflective practice and consider your "gut reaction" to the situation: What preconceptions and judgments might you bring to the situation? What are your loyalties and intuitions? Where do these come from?
- State the conflict or dilemma as you currently see it:
Try to articulate the issue in one sentence. If you, it can't be better to break the problem down into two questions or issues and tackle them one at a time.
Example of ethics question: "Given [state uncertainty or conflict about values], what decisions or actions are ethically justifiable"?
- Identify stakeholders: Who will be impacted by the decisions made? Who ultimately has decision-making authority? In clinical ethics the key stakeholder is the patient affected by treatment decisions and his/her family; how can they be engaged in the process?
- Determine best process for decision-making: How urgent is the situation? How can stakeholder's best be engaged? Stakeholders deserve to know and understand how and why a decision that affects them was made. It is important to remember that transparency is not just about the transmission of information; it is also about keeping people engaged constructively in the process. In rare cases where confidentiality is ethically necessary, the process should be still made as transparent as possible while identifying the confidentiality constraints explicitly.

2 STUDY the Facts

In any complex situation, different parties will have different views of the facts of the situation. Ideally, all stakeholders should have a chance to present their views to one another in a respectful, open environment, considering both the context of the situation and the evidence:

A. Clinical Issues

- What is the patient's medical history/ diagnosis / prognosis?
- Is the problem Acute? Chronic? Critical? Emergent? Reversible?
- What are the goals of treatment? What are the probabilities of success?
- What are the risks and side effects of treatment?
- What is the standard of practice? What does the evidence say?

B. Patient and Family Preferences:

- What has the patient expressed about preferences for treatment?
What is the patient's long- and short term goals?
- Is the patient capable of making treatment decisions? What is the evidence of incapacity?
- If the patient is not capable, who is the patient's *Substitute Decision Maker (SDM)*?
- Is the SDM making decisions appropriately, based on patient wishes and best interests?
- Is the SDM making decisions appropriately, based on patient wishes and best interests?
- If the patient is now incapable, is there any information regarding what the patient might have wanted given the current circumstance? What kind of values did he or she have? How did he or she live her life? What kind of person was the patient? What kind of values did he or she have? Have did he or she live her life? What seemed most important to him or her?
- What are the family's needs and wishes?

C. Quality of Life:

- What are the prospects, with or without treatment, for a return to the patient's normal life?
- Does the patient seem to find his or her daily life satisfying?
- What gives him or her pleasure and meaning?
- What suffering or burdens might the patient experience from the treatments proposed?
- How can the patient be made most comfortable? How can the patient's psycho-social and spiritual needs be the best met?

D. Contextual Features:

- Who is the patient's family? What are the perceived family dynamics?
- Who speaks for the family? Is there conflict amongst family members?
- Are there cultural, religious, or social factors that might influence treatment decisions?
- What is the relationship between the patient/family and team?
- Are there team issues that might influence decisions?
- Are there organizational or systems issues complicating the situation?

3 SELECT reasonable options

- Always look for more than two. Try brainstorming options without evaluating at first or start by describing your ideal solution and work back ward to options that are more realistic given the context.

4 UNDERSTAND values and duties

- Which values are in conflict? Where values may be compromised, what can you do to minimize the negative impact?
- Are there professional obligations or standards to consider?
- Consider how various options reflect or support the duties, principles and values described in Part 2.

5 EVALUATE and **JUSTIFY** options

For each option consider:

- What are the possible harms to the patient? To other stakeholders?
- What are the probable benefits to the patient? To other stakeholders?
- Which duties, principles and values support this option?
- What if everyone in these circumstances did this? (Does this set a good example? Are we making it easier or harder for others to do the right thing)?
- Does your solution answer the question you described above?
- Choose the option with the best consequences overall and closest alignment with key duties, principles, and values. Clearly state reasons for the decision. Remember that you are aiming at “the perfect” choice, but a good and defensible choice under the circumstances.
- Anticipate how you might answer criticisms.

6 SUSTAIN and **REVIEW** the plan

Accepting responsibility for an ethical choice means ensuring that the decision made is enacted by articulating a clear plan of action and communicating it to stakeholders appropriately. It also means accepting the possibility that you might be wrong or that you may need to revise your decision in light of new information or changing circumstances. In reviewing time plan consider:

- How well did the decision-making process work?
- Was the decision carried out?
- Was the result satisfactorily?
- Does this situation point to a systems problem (e.g., policy gap)?
- What lessons were learned from the situation?
- How will the team respond to similar situations in the future?
- Are there opportunities to appeal or modify the decision based on new information?
- Have new questions emerged? (If so? do they require similar deliberation?).



CLINICAL ETHICS WORKSHEET

ISSUES

This worksheet is designed to help people engage in rigorous ethical decision-making for specific patient cases. Ethical decision-making is not linear; you may have to revisit earlier steps in the process as additional questions arise or facts emerge.

1 IDENTIFY issues and DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- Engage in reflective practice: what is your gut reaction?
- State the question or dilemma as you currently see it: "Given [state uncertainty or conflict about values], what decisions or actions are ethically justifiable?"
- Determine best process for decision-making and key stakeholders?

2 STUDY the Facts

- Not only the medical facts are important, but also the patient's goals, wishes, and perception of quality of life, as well as the information about their family, background, and organizational issues,

Clinical Issues:

History, Diagnosis, Prognosis, Options

Patient & Family Preferences:

Long-and short-term goals, wishes and values

Quality of life:

Patient's view of QoL, benefit, suffering

Contextual Features:

Family, cultural, and religious belief, organizational issues.

3 SELECT Reasonable options:

- What are the realistic alternatives, care plans or treatment options? (Look for more than two).

Alt 1

Alt 2

Alt 3

4 UNDERSTAND values and duties

- What principles, duties and values are relevant to the options (See part 2 of Ethical Framework)
- What are the relevant legal requirements, professional standards, and policies?
- Are key values, duties, principles, or standards in conflict?

Informed Consent: Beneficence and Best Interest, Utility and Justice, Patient and Family Centered care, Therapeutic Relationship, Veracity, Vital Signs Medical Center Mission, Vision and Values, Confidentiality and Privacy.

5 EVALUATE and justify options

- What are the possible harms / benefits to various stakeholders of various options?
- Choose the option with best consequences and alignment with duties, principles, and values.
- State clear reasons for your choice, anticipate questions and criticisms.

Alt 1

Alt 2

Alt 3

6 SUSTAIN and review plan

- Identify how best to implement, communicate, and document the decision to patient and key stakeholders.
- Reflect on the decision and the process. What lessons could be learned for future cases?
- Does this situation point to a systems problem (e.g., policy gap)?

Other Notes:

Part 5: Ethical Resources at Vital Signs Medical Center

Clinical Ethics Resources

Vital Signs Medical Center Clinical Ethics program is uses a “Hub and Spoke” structure to deliver Clinical Ethics Services, including ethics policy review, ethics consolation and ethics educations. This approach strengthens staff capacity in clinical ethics by providing decentralized resources coordinated by a centralized core of ethics leadership. The Hub of Clinical Ethics at Vital Signs Medical Center is comprised of the Ethical Committee Chairs. The spokes are head of the Departments, Medical Director, Quality Director, and Quality Department staff. The Central Hub supports and collaborates with ethics Spokes throughout the organization, to integrate ethical awareness and practices across the organization.

Organizational Ethics Resources

Organizational Ethics resources at Vital Signs Medical Center are decentralized. Staff, physicians, learners, and Administration encountering an ethical dilemma are encouraged to consult with a range of ethics-related resources across the organization appropriate to tine specific issue. Some of these resources are seen in Figure 5.



What is Ethical issue?

Ethics is about:

- Deciding what we should do (what decisions are morally right or acceptable);
- Explaining why we should do it (justifying our decision in moral terms); and describing how we should do it (the way we respond).

Ethical issues are often framed as “should” questions. For example:

- How should the organization make decisions about how much funding to provide to each of its programs?
- If there is a shortage of staff? how should organization manage the staffing plan?
- Should an individual be informed of a “near miss” in his or her care?

Ethical issues may involve one or more of the following:

- **Ethical Violation** – when an action that appears to be unethical is being proposed or carried out (e.g., an individual is being given a treatment without providing a valid consent)
- **Ethical Dilemma** – when there are competing courses of action both of which may be ethically defensible (e.g., conflicting values) and there is a difference of opinion as to how to proceed.
- **Ethical Uncertainty** – when it is unclear what ethical principles are at play or whether or not the situation represents an ethical problem.
- **Ethical (Moral) Distress** – when you find yourself in a situation of discomfort, if you have failed to live up to your own ethical expectations, or if you are unable to carry out what you believe is the right course of action due to organizational or other constraints

(Trillium Health Partners, 2013)



FIGURE 5

Ethical Issues in Saudi Arabia

Recent descriptive, cross sectional study of Almoallem et al., 2020 in top ethical issues in healthcare providers in Saudi Arabia reported a multiple ethical challenges they were facing in daily practice. A significant results of top ethical issues identified were “disagreement with the patients’ relatives about treatment” (91%), patient disagreement with decisions made by professionals (84%), treating the incompetent patient (79%), conflict with administration policy and procedures (77%), scarcity of resources (72%), and making decision about do-not-resuscitate or life-sustaining treatment (68%). The study was conducted in Riyadh's private and governmental hospitals from June to December 2017 with a total of 455 physicians. Although, the generalizability of the study may somehow less due to less broader subject and area the study still highly suggested that healthcare workers in Saudi arabia needs an improvement in ethics knowledge through educational program. Further, a recommendation that there is a valid need for other healthcare professionals and other sectors within society to engage in serious and continuous dialogue to address these ethical issues.

Further Reading / Other Resources

Books and Guidelines, Handbooks

Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS) Medical Code of Ethics, 2nd edition
<https://www.scfhs.org.sa/en/elibrary/DocsLibrary/versions/Documents/Medical%20ethics.pdf>

Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS) Code of Ethics for Health Practitioners, 2014

<https://www.scfhs.org.sa/en/registration/ClassAndRegister/Reregister/Documents/Ethics%20for%20Health%20Practitioners.pdf>

Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS) Professionalism and Ethics Handbook for Residents, 2015

<https://www.scfhs.org.sa/en/Media/OtherPublications/Documents/Professionalism%20and%20Ethics%20Handbook%20for%20Residents.pdf>

World Medical Association, Medical Ethics Manual, 3rd edition, 2015 (English)

https://www.wma.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Ethics_manual_3rd_Nov2015_en.pdf

World Medical Association, Medical Ethics Manual, translated by Prof. Mohamed Salah Ben Ammar, University of Tunis Faculty of Medicine (Arabic)

https://www.wma.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ethics_manual_arabic.pdf

International Council of Nurses (ICN) Code of Ethics for Nurses Revised 2021

https://www.icn.ch/system/files/2021-10/ICN_Code-of-Ethics_EN_Web_0.pdf

Collections of Case Studies

International Chair in Bioethics, Casebook Series

http://www.int-chair-bioethics.org/?page_id=41

World Health Organization (WHO), 2009, Casebook on Ethical Issues in International Health Research, Editors Richard Cash, Daniel Wikler, Abha Saxebar & Alexander Capron, Associate Editor Reva Gutnik, with Editorial guidance from Astrid Stuckelberger and Philippe Chastonay from University of Geneva.

https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44118/9789241547727_eng.pdf;jsessionid=A330FE939C37F56E797E2D5ECA7297B2?sequence=4

Public Health Ethics Casebook (*Public Health Ethics: Spanning the Globe*)

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-23847-0>

Media links

“Doctor – Tell Me The Truth.” BBC Radio Four series examines how openness about medical errors can improve patient safety

In a two part Radio Four series, “Doctor – Tell Me The Truth” Professor James Reason examines the impact of an innovative program created at the University of Michigan in which doctors have to be open about medical errors and asks whether such a program could work in the NHS.

Episode One: Monday 20th Feb 20.00

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01c7nd3>

Inside the ethics Committee - BBC Radio 4

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007xbtd>

Episode Two: Monday 27th February 20.00

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01cjm5d>

Seminar and Courses

Health Ethics Seminar

The seminars focus on emerging issues in healthcare. The speakers are usually affiliated with various healthcare disciplines, programs, and institutions, and have special expertise, practice and/or academic knowledge about specific ethical issues. They offered 3-4 seminars/month and each month co-hosted one “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) event”. Most seminars take place from 12:00 - 13:00 MDT/MST on Thursdays via Zoom application. +10 hours GMT+3 Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
<https://www.ualberta.ca/john-dossetor-health-ethics-centre/events/health-ethics-seminars/index.html>

Archives Seminars

<https://www.ualberta.ca/john-dossetor-health-ethics-centre/events/health-ethics-seminars/archived-seminars.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Public Health Ethics Training Materials

<https://www.pathlms.com/naccho/courses/282>

Useful links

[Saudi Society for Health Care Ethics](https://www.saudisocietyforhealthcareethics.com/)

[World Health Organization Global Health Ethics](https://www.who.int/ethics/global_health_ethics)

[Bioethics International](https://bioethicsinternational.org/)

[The Hasting Center](https://www.hastingcenter.org/)

[Global Bioethics Initiative](https://globalbioethics.org/)

Others

[King Abdulaziz University, Rabigh, Saudi Arabia,
Faculty of Medicine, Ethics Workbook and Study Guide, 2018](https://www.kau.edu.sa/en/medicine/ethics-workbook-and-study-guide-2018)

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Appendix A: Glossary Ethical Values / Principles

AUTONOMY: Respect for autonomy (respect people's right to self-determination or self-governance such that their views, decisions and actions are based on their personal values and beliefs; the vehicle for this principle in health care and research is generally the free and informed consent process).

BENEFICENCE: Act beneficently toward others (contribute to the welfare of others, which may include preventing harm, removing harm, promoting well-being, or maximizing good).

COMMON GOOD: A specific "good" that is shared and beneficial for all (or most) members of a given community.

COMPASSION: defined as understanding and concern for another person's distress, it is essential in healthcare.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Keep private information confidential (keep identifying personal information as well as confidences secret, unless consent to disclose this information is given by the person to whom it belongs or disclosure is required by law).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Disclose conflicts of interest and avoid disqualifying conflicts of interest (disclose both real and perceived conflicts between one's self-interest and/or one's obligations to one or more individuals or groups).

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION: Refusing to participate in required action, or seeking exemption from participation in classes of interventions (e.g. abortion, gender reassignment surgery, organ transplantation) that threaten a person's sense of moral integrity. It also includes refusal to participate in an action or intervention perceived to be inappropriate for a specific patient or it ignores the patient's wishes.

DIGNITY: Respect the dignity of morally valuable beings (treat beings in a way that honors their value or worth based on morally significant qualities, e.g., sentience, relationality, rationality).

DISCLOSURE: Disclose information that people or groups have a right to (provide information needed to make an informed decision, and information about errors or adverse events in treatment or research).

DIVERSITY: Respect diversity (accommodate, protect or support differences, including religious, cultural, political and other differences, among people and groups).

This is not an exhaustive list. There may be other ethical vues/principles at play in a particular situation

INCLUSIVENESS: Involvement/representation of everyone who is part of a problem situation based on notion that each brings knowledge or expertise needed to address the problem and feel ownership of the solution.

INTEGRITY: Act with integrity (give priority to ethical considerations even when there is a strong drive for self-interest or other desires, or where violating ethical requirements could pass unnoticed).

JUSTICE: Promote justice and fairness (treat people and groups fairly by treating morally relevant cases alike, by promoting fair relations among individuals and social groups, and by ensuring fair and equitable access to resources and opportunities, including fair distribution of benefits and burdens).

NON-MALEFICENCE: Act so as to do no harm (avoid causing harm to individuals or groups, or risking harms of significant magnitude and probability).

PERSON-CENTERED or FAMILY-CENTERED CARE: Provide person-centered or family-centered care (organize and provide therapies, services, interventions and interactions in ways that respect and respond to the person's or family's values, preferences, decisions or self-identified best interests).

RIGHTS: Protect the rights of individuals and groups (honor the legitimate moral and legal claims of individuals or groups).

SAFETY: Ensure safety (avoid injury and reduce risks of harm to individuals and groups; promote a culture that reports errors and near-misses and strives to improve the safety of clinical, research and organizational environments).

SOLIDARITY: Requires consideration of the extended community and acting in such a way that reflects concern for the well-being of others.

STEWARDSHIP: The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care (e.g., public healthcare dollars).

TRANSPARENCY: Make decision-making transparent (communicate and make accessible decisions and their rationales to all stakeholders).

UTILITY: Maximizing the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of individuals.

This is not an exhaustive list. There may be other ethical vues/principles at play in a particular situation

Appendix B: Ethics Worksheet – ISSUES Framework

(Completed form can also be used to request a consult from the Clinical Ethics Committee)

Patient/Client/Resident name	File No.	Age	Gender	Date

National/Iqama ID #	Mobile Number	Nationality	Do you need translator	Is it your first time?
			No Yes:	No Yes:

Step 1: Identify and Decision-making process?
What is the presenting ethical issue(s)?
What are the relevant medical/clinical indications?
What is the individual/group preferences?
What is the evidence? <i>include risks and benefits to the organization and patients; impact of situation on quality or services; best practices etc.</i>
What are the contextual features? <i>internal and external directives and partnerships legal considerations past cases; cultural or environmental issues (i.e., staff morale); public opinion</i>
What is the ethical issue?

Disclaimer

It is a pdf fillable form, it requires Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader/Acrobat DC to fill them out online or on your computer.
For any questions using this form kindly contact janastacio@vitalsigns.com.sa

Step 2: Study the facts

<i>Who are the stakeholders (relevant parties)?</i>	<i>What principles/criteria do stakeholders believe are relevant to the issue?</i>	<i>Which principles/criteria do stakeholders agree are most important in the current context? (Rate from 1 to)</i>
<i>Are there any other factors that need to be considered?</i>		
<i>Have perspectives of relevant individuals been sought?</i>		

Disclaimer

It is a pdf fillable form, it requires Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader/Acrobat DC to fill them out online or on your computer.
 For any questions using this form kindly contact janastacio@vitalsigns.com.sa

Step 3: Select the Reasonable options			
Alternative 1:		Alternative 2:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Consistent with KSA laws and VSMC policies <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent with mission, vision, values, and strategic directions		<input type="checkbox"/> Consistent with KSA laws and VSMC policies <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent with mission, vision, values, and strategic directions	
Benefits/Strengths:		Benefits/Strengths:	
Harms/Limitations:		Harms/Limitations:	
Meets Decision-Making Criteria (list)		Meets Decision-Making Criteria (list)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Additional Resources Used (list):		Additional Resources Used (list):	
What is the most ethically justifiable option?			

Disclaimer

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Step 4: Understand values and duties

Documentation/Communication of Decision (who, what, where how):

Implementation Plan:

Step 5: Evaluation

Implementation Plan:

Process Met Conditions	Evidence:	Reviewed by:
Relevance		
Publicity		
Revisions and Appeals		
Empowerment		

Disclaimer

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Step 6: Sustain and review the plan

Are we (am I) comfortable with this decision?

Division/Team/Location	Consultation requested from Clinical Ethics Committee by	Date of Consultation Request	Contact Details

Patient and/ or family members notified of consult	Yes	No

Consult provided by:	Signature:	Date completed:

Disclaimer

It is a pdf fillable form, it requires Adobe Acrobat or Acrobat Reader/Acrobat DC to fill them out online or on your computer.
For any questions using this form kindly contact janastacio@vitalsigns.com.sa

Who provides Ethics Consultation?

Ethics Consultation is provided by a team of health care professionals at Vital Signs Medical Center. All Ethics Consultants are trained in ethics as well as mediation and communication skills. The team is supported by the Higher Executive Committee through the guidance of Medical Director.

How do I access the Ethics Consultation Service?

You may contact the Ethics Consultation Service through (13) 889-9997 (or ext. XXX if you are calling from within the facility) and ask to page the Ethics Consultation Service. Leave your name and the phone number at which you may be reached. An Ethics Consultant or team of Ethics Committee will call you back shortly.

Ethics Consultation is available Saturday to Thursday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

After hours leave a message with the Office of Administration and Management at ext. XXXX

email ethics@vitalsigns.com.sa

and an Ethics Consultant will get back to you the next day.



Resources

For more information visit our websites

www.vitalsigns.com.sa

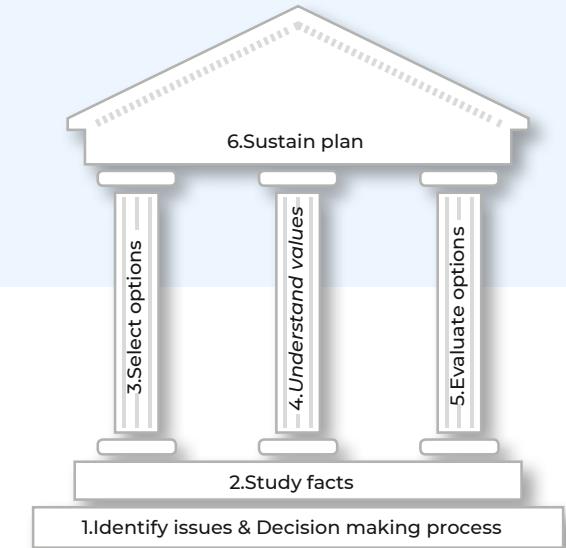
For staff:
(VSMC Intranet)
<http://>

For patients and families:

Ethics email address:
ethics@vitalsigns.com.sa

Note:

Ethics Consultation Service



What is ethics?

Ethics is about reflecting on our values and making decisions that are values-based.

Typical ethical questions include:

What should we do?

(What actions are good or right?)

Why should we do it?

(Exploring the reasons for our decisions.)

How should we do it?

(What plan is most ethical?)

Patients, families, staff, doctors and trainees make up the health care team. Health care teams make ethical decisions every day in caring for patients.

However, when teams face difficult choices or conflict arises, the **Ethics Consultation Service** provides a process to help.

This process allows the team to consider their personal and professional values, and to reflect on what is best for patients.

Any member of the health care team, including patients and families, may contact the

Ethics Consultation Service for support.

If you would like to learn more about the Clinical Ethics Committee or wish to schedule an ethics consultation service, please call +966138899997

Ethics Framework Overview

Guidebook 1st edition

Get your copy to assist you in decision making process, it utilized ISSUES framework Adapted from Hamilton Health Sciences, HHS Pandemic ISSUES Ethics Framework. COVID-19: HHS Resources Ethics During COVID-19. [<https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/covid19/staff-physician/hhs-resources/>]
post with permission

When should I contact the Ethics Consultation Services?

If you find yourself struggling with a difficult ethical decision, or wondering what is the right thing to do in a complex patient care situation, think about contacting the Ethics Consultation Service. An Ethics Consultant will speak with you to find out your needs, and may offer:

- Education and guidance & referrals
- Facilitation of team discussions
- Conflict resolution support,, also called *mediation*

Ethics Consultants do not make decision others, but they do support those facing difficult choices by exploring all options.

Common situations where Ethics Consultants can help, include:

- Disagreements regarding the plan of care or goals of treatment for a patient
- Uncertainty about how to make decisions for a patient who lacks capacity to make his/her own decisions
- Conflict regarding what treatments are best for patients

Clinical Ethics Team Commitment

In the course of our care, we will focus on what is right and good and in the best interests of our patients. We will promote and defend human dignity and respect the integrity of human life from its beginnings until death. We will be guided by the highest moral and ethical norms, by the law, by the values of our community, by Islamic principles and by the character and policies of Vital Signs Medical Center. We invite all those we serve—our patients, their families and providers of care—to seek an Ethics Consultation whenever ethical questions arise.

If you are not sure if the Ethics Consultation Service can help in your situation, please page us and we will discuss your situation and if necessary connect you to the right service.

What is involved in an Ethics Consultation?

Ethics Consultants assist the process of making ethical decisions by:

- ✓ Discussing the facts of the situation with everyone involved to make sure that the issues, choices, goals, and likely outcomes are clearly understood.
- ✓ Exploring ethical values, principles, norms, policies, standards and resources
- ✓ Making clear the patient's goals, values, wishes and best interests
- ✓ Mediating and resolving conflicts between parties
- ✓ Helping the health care team agree on the right course of action

Ethics Consultants respect the privacy of everyone involved, within legal limits.

What you should know about this Ethics Consultation

- There is no charge for this service
- The recommendations of the consultants will become part of the patient's medical record
- The consultation, like all medical treatment, is confidential
- Further consultation may always be held at your request
- The facility will provide referrals to appropriate outside resources at your request

"We take care of you"

Contacts & feedback

We welcome comments and suggestions for improving our Code of Conducts and Ethical frameworks. If you think something is missing or can be improved, please let us know at

janastacio@vitalsigns.com.sa

info@vitalsigns.com.sa

Vitalsigns_sa/socialmedia

